



**Report to the Board of Supervisors**  
Prepared by the Maricopa County Planning and Development  
Department



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**Commission Hearing Date:** September 29, 2011

**Board Hearing Date:** November 16, 2011  
(continued from November 2, 2011)

**Case #/Title:** Z2011034 – RE Gillespie Solar Electric Generating Station

**Agenda Item:** 2

**Supervisor District:** 5

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**Applicant:** Watt Sure Farm, LLC

**Owner:** RE Gillespie 1, LLC

**Request:** Special Use Permit (SUP) for a photo-voltaic solar generating facility in the Rural-190 zoning district

**Site Location:** West of Old US HWY 80, approx. 1-1/2 mi. north of Pierpoint Rd. (in the Cotton Center area)

**Site Size:** Approx. 153 acres

**Density:** N/A

**County Island Status:** N/A

**County Plan:** In Concert – Industrial

**Municipal Plan:** N/A

**Municipal Comments:** N/A

**Support/Opposition:** One (1) item of opposition

**Existing On-Site and Adjacent Zoning and Land Use:**

On-site: Rural-190 / farm land

North: Rural-43 / future arterial street, then fallow and active farm land

South: Rural-190 / future collector street then active farm land

East: Rural-190 then I-3 (Town of Gila Bend) / State Highway then irrigation canal then Lakeside Ski Village  
West: Rural-190 /future collector street then active farm land

**Staff**

**Recommendation:** Staff recommended the Commission motion for **approval** of **Z2011034** for the following reasons:

- The proposed facility is consistent with CPA2010016.
- There are no outstanding review comments.
- The applicant agrees to provide appropriate mitigation measures regarding neighborhood compatibility.

**Commission**

**Recommendation:** Recommended approval by a 7-0 vote subject to stipulations "a" – "y" modified from the recommendation in the staff report as stated in the attached draft minutes.

**Additional  
Comments:**

After the printing of the BOS short report for November 2, 2011, the applicant expressed concerns over the language of stipulations "d.3" and "e" as recommended by the Commission due to the presence of an existing 69 kV power line located along Old US Highway 80 and an existing 12 kV power line located along the northern boundary of the site. Subsequent discussions with MCDOT revealed that the issue addressed in stipulation "e" is already covered in the standard MCDOT right-of-way dedication language; therefore, stipulation "e" is not necessary and may be deleted. Changes to stipulation "d.3" are deemed unnecessary for the same reasons. Therefore, the language included in the attached Resolution and related Exhibit A reflect the stipulations as recommended by the Commission, with the deletion of stipulation "e" and no changes to stipulation "d.3".

Also since the Commission hearing of September 29, 2011, there has been additional discussion regarding the use of a solid masonry wall to surround the site in lieu of a chain link fence as proposed. Staff does not support the use of a solid masonry wall due to CPTED (crime prevention through environmental design) issues. Placing a solid masonry wall around a remote facility such as this will promote graffiti while hindering law enforcement personnel during routine patrol. Further, a solid masonry wall will not accomplish the opponent's goal of mitigating the "prison like" appearance

created by a chain link fence. Staff believes the negative effects of a solid masonry wall outweigh any gains in aesthetics and would be to the detriment to the existing community.

Staff does, however, believe a legitimate issue of aesthetics exists which is why the applicant agreed to the perimeter treatment as currently proposed. Further, the surrounding area will not likely develop for many years to come and staff believes that some of the responsibility for buffering lies with the future development. If the Board wishes to address this aesthetics issue to a greater extent, however, staff would suggest increasing the depth and vegetative intensity of the perimeter buffer area, while also considering the use of wrought iron fencing in lieu of chain link or solid masonry.

Motion for BOS approval must be by Resolution. See the attached Resolution of Approval and related Exhibit A for Z2011034.

Presented by:  
Reviewed by:

Robert H. Kuhfuss, AICP, Solar Program Manager  
Terri S. Hogan, AICP, Current Planning Supervisor

Attachments:

Resolution (3 pages)  
Exhibit A (5 pages)  
September 29, 2011 Draft P&Z Minutes (21 pages)  
September 29, 2011 P&Z Packet (89 pages)